

its skin regularly and appeared in perfect health. At the end of the time it suddenly began to get thin and weak very rapidly, so we let it go in the jungle." Toads and ducks were also presented. The author of the above story, Mr. F. G. Ballantyne of the Poloi T. E., who kept the reptile in captivity, Col. R. St. J. Hickman, C.I.E., and Dr. Davis of the Bura Jalinga T. E. can vouch for the above facts. I would be glad to hear from any member of a similar case of the longevity of a python's fast.

BORO JALINGA T. E., DWARBAND P.O.,  
CACHAR,  
17th June 1922.

A. G. MCARTHUR.

[We would refer members interested in this subject to Col. Wall's exhaustive treatise on the common python which appeared in Part II, Vol. XXI of this Society's Journal. "A Popular Treatise on the Common Indian Snakes". Illustrated copies of this part are obtainable from the Society—Price Rs. 10.—Eds.]

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#### NO. XXIX.—NOTE ON THE OPERCULUM OF THE TURBAN-SHELLS.

The object forwarded by Captain T. S. Jervis is the stony operculum of one of the Turban-shells, gastropod molluscs of the family Turbinidae. Possibly it belongs to the common Indian species *Turbo argyrostoma*, abundant on rocky shores all round the coasts of India. This operculum is always plano-convex in shape and stony in structure. In life it is attached by the flattened side to the upper surface of the tail end of its owner, which is a snail-shaped mollusc allied to the pretty Top-shells (Trochidae) so common at home among rocks and boulders; the latter, however, have an operculum thin and horny and marked with a closely set spiral, very different from the thick, stony and massive one characteristic of the Turban shells. When one of these animals retires into its shell, when alarmed or attacked, the operculum serves as a door or rather stopper to close the opening and so to keep the intruder out. The Turban shell operculum is particularly effective for this purpose; it is too hard to be broken through or pierced and its rounded (convex) shape prevents a powerful enemy from getting a grip at the sides in order to tear it out.

The outer rounded surface of the operculum is usually more or less prettily mottled with green on a white ground; that of one species found in New Zealand is so very brightly ornamented with green and brown that the Maoris value it highly as a personal ornament and set it in gold, particularly in the form of brooches; they also employed specially large and fine ones to make the eyes of their weirdly fashioned wooden idols in former times. There are also species so large that the operculum is heavy enough to be used as a paper weight two inches in diameter. Such big shells are valuable as a source of mother of pearl for the manufacture of pearl buttons in particular.

In India the operculum of *Turbo* is one of several common objects of the sea shore that possess deep interest for the pilgrims and devotees who flock in thousands from all parts of India to worship at the most holy shrine of Rameswaram in the south. There, just within the main entrance to the temple, half a dozen shell vendors are allowed stalls; on the floor in each are arranged trim heaps of shells of many sorts, all carefully separated according to their kinds. Here is a pile of several thousand Money Cowries from the Maldives, there a smaller one of the same shells but brighter in colour and larger in size from the

reefs of the coral islands south of Pamban Pass, close by is a heap of the pretty Eyed-Cowry, and so on through the whole series of local shells that are attractive either because of their colour or their shape. And with them are always great heaps of thousands of the stony opercula of the Turban shells. The Tamil name for these is *ambiliman*, meaning "the disc of the moon."

The aetnal shells of Turbo, after the death of the occupants, are often appropriated by hermit-crabs; some of these are more at home on the beach above tide-mark than in the sea, and, in the Laccadive Islands, on turning big boulders in the screw pine scrub along the beach a crowd of hermit-crabs usually make off in a flurry hiding their soft tails in Turban shells.

JAMES HORNELL.

MADRAS, 8th June 1922.

NO. XXX.—SOME INTERESTING SPECIMENS OF THE PIERID  
GENUS *EUCHLÆ*.

(With a text figure)



Among a collection of butterflies sent to the Zoological Survey of India last year for identification by Mr. G. E. Shaw were several specimens of two forms of the Pierid genus *Euchaë*, one closely related to *E. charltonia transcaspica* and the other to *E. belemia*. The form related to *transcaspica* was originally thought to be a race of the form described by Bingham as *Synchlœ lucilla*, (but which is now regarded as a race of *E. charltonia*), differing only in being quite white. It is, however, more closely related to *transcaspica*, differing mainly in size, its whiteness and the paleness of the underside of the wings and the conspicuousness of the marginal white markings on the upperside of the forewings. Mr. N. D. Riley has very kindly compared one of the specimens sent to me with the twenty-four examples of *transcaspica* in the British Museum and finds that it disagrees in these points from all of them. He writes that if there are many specimens exactly like the one I sent him they should receive a name, but though I have seen many specimens I have refrained from describing them as new as I hope Mr. Riley will do so himself. The object of the present note is merely to bring to the notice of the Society's members the fact that the butterflies mentioned here are apparently new, and to ask them if they have any specimens to send them to Mr. Riley at the British Museum, who will I think be pleased to name them.

The form related to *E. belemia* differs chiefly from the *forma typica* in its smaller size and the markings on the apex of the forewings and the underside of the wings. The apical area of the upperside of the forewings is almost entirely black, except for a small white spot near the costa and two ill-defined white dots. The apical area of the underside of the forewings is marked with yellowish\* green stripes, which are considerably narrower than those of the typical

\* Under a lens the "yellowish green" stripes on the underside seem to me to be really blackish, with tiny yellowish-green scales superimposed.